CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) A device for grasping thin cord-like objects comprising:

a hollow, substantially rigid shaft having a proximal end and a distal end, said distal end being pointed, and a lumen extending from said proximal end to said distal end;

a solid rod having a proximal end and a distal end, said rod being positioned in said lumen in reciprocally sliding relationship therewith;

first and second wire-like elements each having a distal end and a proximal end, said first and second wire-like elements being attached at their respective proximal ends to said distal end of said rod so as to extend distally therefrom, said first wire-like element defining a hook-shaped configuration at its distal end, said second wire-like element defining a guide means at its distal end, and said distal ends of said first and second wire-like elements being spring biased away from one another; and

activation means attached to said proximal end of said rod and to said proximal end of said shaft for moving said rod and said wire-like elements between: (i) a first position

wherein said distal ends of said wire-like elements are contained within said shaft, and (ii) a second position wherein said distal ends of said wire-like elements extend outwardly from said distal end of said shaft in flared relationship to one another;

wherein said first wire-like element comprises a proximal segment and a distal segment defining the hook-shaped configuration and said second wire-like element comprises a proximal segment and a distal segment, said second wire-like element distal segment defining the guide means, and when said wire-like elements are in the second position said first wire-like element distal segment extends in a direction toward said second wire-like element distal segment and substantially normal to said second wire-like element distal segment;

said first and second wire-like elements being adapted so that when said wire-like elements are in said second position, said first wire-like element distal segment and said guide means cooperate to define a gap therebetween for receiving said thin cord-like object, and further wherein said guide means serve to guide said thin cord-like object into engagement with said hook-shaped distal end of said first wire-like element when said wire-like elements are moved from said second position to said first position;

whereby said wire-like elements ~~being~~ are adapted to secure said thin cord-like object to said shaft when said wire-like elements are moved from said second position to said first position.

2. (Original) A device according to claim 1 wherein said distal end of said shaft is curved.

3. (Original) A device according to claim 1 wherein said activation means includes spring biasing means for urging said rod and said wire-like members toward their said first position.

4. (Currently Amended) A method for grasping a thin cord-like object comprising:

(1) providing a device comprising:

a hollow, substantially rigid shaft having a proximal end and a distal end, said distal end being pointed, and a lumen extending from said proximal end to said distal end;

a solid rod having a proximal end and a distal end, said rod being positioned in said lumen in reciprocally sliding relationship therewith;

first and second wire-like elements each having a

distal end and a proximal end, said first and second wire-like elements being attached at their respective proximal ends to said distal end of said rod so as to extend distally therefrom, said first wire-like element defining a hook-shaped configuration at its distal end, said second wire-like element defining a guide means at its distal end, and said distal ends of said first and second wire-like elements being spring biased away from one another; and

activation means attached to said proximal end of said rod and to said proximal end of said shaft for moving said rod and said wire-like elements between (i) a first position wherein said distal ends of said wire-like elements are contained within said shaft, and (ii) a second position wherein said distal ends of said wire-like elements extend outwardly from said distal end of said shaft in flared relationship to one another;

wherein said first wire-like element comprises a proximal segment and a distal segment defining the hook-shaped configuration and said second wire-like element comprises a proximal segment and a distal segment, said second wire-like element distal segment defining the guide means, and when said wire-like elements are in the second position said first

wire-like element distal segment extends in a direction toward said second wire-like element distal segment and substantially normal to said second wire-like element distal segment;

said first and second wire-like elements being adapted so that when said wire-like elements are in said second position, said first wire-like element distal segment and said guide means cooperate to define a gap therebetween for receiving said thin cord-like object, and further wherein said guide means serve to guide said thin cord-like object into engagement with said hook-shaped distal end of said first wire-like element when said wire-like elements are moved from said second position to said first position;

whereby said first wire-like elements ~~is~~ are adapted to secure said thin cord-like object to said shaft when said wire-like elements are moved from said second position to said first position;

(2) positioning said rod and said wire-like elements in said first position;

(3) maneuvering said distal end of said shaft so that it is adjacent to the cord-like object which is to be grasped;

(4) positioning said rod and said wire-like members in said second position, and maneuvering said distal end of said shaft as

needed so as to position said flared distal ends of said wire-like elements on opposite sides of said cord-like object; and

(5) thereafter positioning said rod and said wire-like elements in said first position, whereby said guide means guide said thin cord-like object into engagement with said distal end of said first wire-like element and said first wire-like element grapples said cord-like object and attaches it to said distal end of said shaft.